

Get to Know . . .

Chris Bloodworth

Gwen Sinclair

Chris Bloodworth might be a fairly new government documents librarian, but he is no stranger to government information. He has been an Adult Services Librarian at the main branch of the Detroit Public Library (DPL) since 2022. Prior to that, he had a long tenure as a research librarian at Honigman Miller, a large law firm in Detroit, and he also worked in the Arthur Neef Law Library at Wayne State University and at Ohio State University's Moritz Law Library. Most of his training with government information has been practical, beginning when he was a graduate assistant while working on his MLIS at Wayne State University. "Though my library science graduate education has helped me become successful in my career, the knowledge and experience I've gained working in government documents has been learning and acquiring on the fly," he noted.

Chris' subject areas at DPL include social sciences, science and technology, business, and religion, in addition to federal, state, and local government information. He is also responsible for developing educational programs for adult patrons. "In this culture, you have to be a near-jack of all trades," he noted. DPL became a federal depository library in 1868 and was formerly a regional federal depository. The federal documents collection is vast, encompassing 14,500 linear feet. DPL has three "crown jewels" in its federal documents collection: the Serial Set, the *Congressional Record*, and the *American State Papers*. Chris is also responsible for preservation of the documents collection, which has been affected by a series of floods and water-related events. He was pleased that volumes of Secretary of War correspondence and National Weather Service chronological reports that had water and mold damage can be transferred to DPL's regional depository, the University of Minnesota, for conservation work.

Asked what qualities a good government documents librarian should have, Chris replied, "Keen organizational skills, the ability to process a rather complex and multilayered call number system, and having a broad-based subject knowledge. It's impossible to know everything, but you should at least have general awareness of a diverse range of subject areas." His advice for a new government information librarian: "If there's a formal government documents course, take it." He added, "Don't be afraid to learn on the fly. Acquiring new knowledge and skills, you will make mistakes. It's a certain level of discomfort

that you'll have to accept until you become more trained and proficient."

Chris is proud of his work with DPL's African American Booklist Committee, a team of librarians who collaborate on an annual bibliography of recommended books by or about African Americans that is published on DPL's website. He also participates in GODORT by serving on the Publications Committee and the State & Local Documents Interest Group. Outside of work, Chris is a big football fan and is "happy living in a state where we finally have a successful professional NFL team and a college team that is competing for a national title." He is also a huge vinyl record collector and has over one thousand LPs and 45 rpm records. His collection leans heavily towards jazz, R&B, especially Motown, and classic and alternative rock. According to Chris, "The metro Detroit area is a vinyl lover's dream. There is a plethora of used record shops spread throughout southeast Michigan." In addition to collecting records, he also enjoys reading about music and is currently making his way through Questlove's *Music Is History*.

Like many of us, Chris especially enjoys using his subject expertise to answer challenging reference questions. "What I most love is when I get to play to my strengths: basic and in-depth research, analyzing and synthesizing information, and that includes making sense of and processing complex information resources and collection management systems that entail federal government documents," as he put it. A favorite resource is *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, a handy go-to reference for quick statistics. He is also a big fan of GovInfo with its collections of House and Senate documents, the *Congressional Record*, and other statutory and regulatory titles.

Although it has been quite a shift to transition from a law firm to a public library, Chris feels fortunate to be part of the team at DPL. In his words, "I'm blessed to work in a public library environment that has government documents and a broad range of collections that are both historically significant and relevant to not just the diverse community it serves but also to the state and the nation at large."

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